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Kutztown University Senate

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Senate Minutes 12-10-09 (Special Meeting)

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KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY
University Senate Special Meeting

183 Alumni Auditorium, McFarland Student Union Building
Thursday, December 10, 2009

M. Sanelli called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m.

Present: Andrew Arnold, Javier Cevallos, Kate Clair, Todd Folk, Kathleen Hartman, Ted Hickman (Vice-President), Will Jefferson, Andrea Kirshman, Keith Logan, Kevin Mahoney for Steve Schnell, Susan Mangold, Thomas McNally for Ed Christian, George Muugi, Sylvia Pham, Paul Quinn for Sudarshan Fernando, CJ Rhoads, John Riley, Maria Sanelli (President), Lisa Schonberger, John Vafeas for Barth Yeboah, and Carol Watson.

Absent: Len Barish, Nancy Butler, Arifeen Daneshyar, James Delle, Samantha Dennis, Dennis Dietrich, William Donner, Lorri Engstrom, Jack Entriken, Mitch Freed, Manual Guzman, Jo Cohen Hamilton, Gregory Hanson, Joshua Heller, Mary Ellen Jackson, Learning Technologies Department Representative, Mathias Le Bosse, Inmi Lee, Joe Lippincott, John Lizza, Mark Mahosky, Management Department Representative, Marketing Department Representative, James McNiff, Marilyn Meder, Edwin Nieves, Charles Roth, Trucilla Sabatino, Christopher Sacchi, Joo Tan, Heather Thomas, Carlos Vargas, Patricia Walsh-Coates, Anke Walz, and Carole Wells.

Also in Attendance: Janice Chernenkoff, Michael Gambone, Vivian Davis-Martinez, Judy Rauenzahn, Louis Rodriquez, Elizabeth Rogol, and Paul Sable.

This special meeting is being called to order to discuss the restructuring and accreditation within the College of Business which is to occur at the start of the Spring 2010 Semester. At this present time, there are only 15 members of the University Senate present and 29 are needed for a quorum so no official business can be conducted.

Each person present at this time was given a ‘Draft Motion’ as it pertains to the restructuring and accreditation of the College of Business. This ‘draft’ was written by the Senate President and four other Senators. The University Senate leadership feels that there has been an ongoing problem of hasty decision-making and consultation without the proper line of communication as it pertains to the Shared Governance System at the university. It was the feelings of this group of Senators that considerate decision making and early consultation would help build high morale that is necessary to achieve our Kutztown University’s primary mission statement and purpose, academic excellence.

On behalf of the University Senate, M. Sanelli spoke about the concerns that the Senate has had over the past couple of years of being left out of the loop of some very important academic decisions that were made. She recounted Kutztown University’s commitment to Shared Governance as approved by a faculty referendum back on October 12, 1989, by a margin of 147 to 33. Further recalling that the KU Shared Governance structure, articulated in the Final Recommendations on University Governance, charges the University Senate with

responsibility to serve as the primary body to discuss and advise the President on matters of academic importance. The group of Senators feels this was not done, but rather the Administration made yet another important academic decision without consulting with the University Senate.

Dr. Cevallos commented that in 2001, the Council of Trustees had already decided to pursue the AACSB accreditation and by 2004 it was mandated to be completed by both the Council of Trustees and the State System Board of Governors. Once this was mandated, the President had talked to the Deans of the College of Business on several occasions on what they felt would be in the best of interest. The big change that has occurred in these past 7 ½ years is that the previous Chancellor who had made this recommendation has left and the new Chancellor has decided to remove all mandates on the State System Level to be accredited. The problem that has now occurred is that the Council of Trustees will not agree to change the mandate and they want the accreditation process to keep moving forward.

President Cevallos stated that when the College of Business gains AACSB Accreditation, it will set our university apart from other universities. This is a very prestigious award that sets the standards and credentials very high. This will help when our undergraduates from the College of Business want to apply to another university to pursue a graduate program in Business. It is also beneficial for a student who is applying for a job to have graduated from a post-secondary school with this accreditation.

When discussing a plan with the Dean of the College of Business, it was decided that they would take the four departments and divide them into two instead, the Department of Business Administration and the Department of Professional Studies. President Cevallos understands that it is not easy to tell a faculty member that they are moving from one department to another, but in the long run, they are not eliminating a faculty position.

The University Senators were also very concerned in the process of disbanding the College of Graduate Studies that was done during the summer of 2009. As President Cevallos recalls, when he came to the university 7 ½ years ago there wasn't a College of Graduate Studies at that time, but rather a person in the Provost Office that filled the position of an Associate Provost and the Dean of Graduate Studies. At some point when the university was trying to grow and the budget situation was better, it was felt that we needed a full-time Graduate Dean so that is when it went back to the old structure. Now with the budget looking so gloom, the administration decided to go back to the structure where as one person is responsible for being the Associate Provost as well as the Dean of Graduate Studies in a cost saving effort.

President Cevallos stated that in the next 12 months, the university will be facing the most difficult time since 1929 as an institution. To make sure that the faculty voice is heard, Dr. Cevallos has met with the Strategic Planning and Resource Committee along with Dr. Paul Quinn, APSCUF President, and asked Dr. Quinn to choose a group of people to his liking to look at all the budget issues and concerns that we are facing on campus. Once the APSCUF Committee does this, they will come forth with the President and Provost, along with the Budget Review Committee, to discuss all the issues and to offer suggestions that will then move forward to the SPRC. By doing this, it will include the whole Shared Governance Process to come up with resolutions for this hard economic times.

A discussion followed with many issues coming up such as whether or not AACSB Accreditation will affect contractual issues, whether there is another accreditation body they could look into that might be more cost-effective at this time of the budget crisis, and faculty evaluation standards for AACSB. Several grievances were filed in regards to contractual issues and they went to arbitration and the faculty won.

Another question that came up was why such a strict timeline. According to President Cevallos the university was approved as pre-candidacy stage and a mentor was assigned and once this is done, there are very strict timelines. He was questioned on what would happen if KU requests an extension. If we do not follow the initial timeline, KU will not be considered for accreditation for a very long time. Dr. Cevallos was asked what the timeline was when the process was started. He responded that in 2005 a pre-candidacy was done, it was discussed at APSCUF Meet & Discuss in the summer of 2009, and the Senate did not hear about any of this until October 2009. Senators pointed out once again, that there is a lack of communication with the University Senate being consulted back in 2005 with this process, why?

C.J. Rhoads expressed that the main concern is not the actual reorganization, but the way it was handled. There have been several faculty members that were told that they are no longer qualified to teach specific courses even after they have taught them for the past several years. C.J. Rhoads feels that a bigger discussion should be held that includes the University Senate, APSCUF, Council of Trustees, College of Business Deans, faculty members, and the Administration on what is expected of these faculty members and how strong or strict the guidelines will be and to help guide the faculty through this process.

In the end, University Senate President M. Sanelli, and many other University Senators, expressed that they should be included on important academic decisions that are being discussed before the actual implementation of these decisions.

The discussion was adjourned.